

## What is the Virginia Adopt-A-Stream Program?

The Virginia Adopt-A-Stream Program is a litter education and cleanup campaign designed to encourage citizen-based stewardship of the Commonwealth's water resources. Citizens who "adopt-a-stream" may organize a litter cleanup, stencil storm drains, or monitor water quality. The Department of Conservation and Recreation provides all the necessary tools for a successful cleanup or storm drain stenciling project.

## Why stencil storm drains?

There are still many citizens who do not understand the connection between community storm drains and local streams, rivers, and lakes. Citizens mistakenly believe that storm drains carry waste to a plant for treatment prior to being discharged into Virginia's waterways. Stenciling storm drains, as a reminder of the connection between streets and nearby waters, is a direct and cost-effective project that a community can do to significantly decrease the amount of waste materials routinely dumped into these drains.

Community-based volunteer storm drain stenciling projects offer an educational pollution prevention activity with a lasting effect. Storm drain stenciling is a practical, positive, easy first step toward public education, involvement, and support. Stenciled storm drains will raise citizen awareness and educate the public about stormwater runoff and nonpoint source pollution. Stencils tell people not to dump and why.

## Who should participate?

Community storm drain stenciling projects can be a tool for:

- Educators – as a service learning project, students can stencil storm drains located on school property (stenciling projects complement Project Wet and Project Wild)
- Girl and Boy Scouts – earn a conservation badge by stenciling neighborhood storm drains!
- Local governments – stenciling storm drains meets new National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit requirements for community stormwater education
- Business and industry – show your commitment to water quality in your community!
- Conservation organizations – protect Virginia's natural resources and reduce nonpoint source pollution
- Neighborhood associations and churches – a cost-effective, community-based approach to protecting water quality

## How do I organize a stenciling project?

1. Determine the area and size of your project – how many volunteers will be helping and how many drains will you stencil? It takes approximately 15 minutes to stencil one storm drain.
2. Secure permission from the local public works department or the Virginia Department of Transportation – contact us at DCR at (804) 692-0148 or 1-877-42WATER; we'll help you determine who to call!
3. Involve your neighbors – win community approval and support by advertising your stenciling project with door hangers, which explain why “there’s something fishy going on in your neighborhood”
4. Recruit volunteers
5. Collect project supplies – the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation will provide a storm drain stenciling kit, which includes a mylar stencil, non-toxic paint, a whisk broom, work gloves, safety vests, trash bags, and door hangers.
6. Prepare work site – the pavement should be dry and warm (avoid rainy and/or windy days); use the broom to sweep dirt/debris away from stencil area; place stencil where message will be most visible (avoid areas where dirt and leaves will collect and cover the message)
7. Stencil – spray paint the message (two light coats are better than one thick coat that puddles around the letters – be careful of drifting paint, especially near parked cars!) Stenciled messages will last for approximately two years on a paved surface
8. Clean up – collect supplies and dispose/recycle collected debris

## Do you have any other suggestions?

- Work in groups of two or more
- Be conscious of the weather forecast – schedule a rain date
- Mark work areas with “wet paint” signs
- Consider stenciling public places such shopping malls, libraries, and schools
- Keep all involved parties informed at all times; remember “knowledge is power” and “unity is strength”
- Storm drain openings may be large – beware of loss of materials or volunteers!
- Paint is permanent

## Are storm drain stenciling projects educational?

Volunteers will:

- Learn about the types of nonpoint source pollution and ways they can help prevent it
- Make the connection between land use, stormwater runoff, and water quality

# Virginia Storm Drain Stenciling Program

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☐ I am interested in stenciling storm drains in my community!

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

***Please send me:***

Quantity \_\_\_\_\_

***I would prefer***

"Dump No Waste Drains to . . ."

- ☐ Stream
- ☐ River
- ☐ Lake
- ☐ Bay

- ☐ Blue paint
- ☐ White paint

**Please return to:**  
Department of Conservation & Recreation  
Adopt-A-Stream Program Coordinator  
203 Governor Street, Suite 206  
Richmond, Virginia 23219